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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 000052

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/07/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#) [JO](#)  
SUBJECT: FURTHER REACTION TO SADDAM'S EXECUTION

REF: AMMAN 11

Classified By: Ambassador David Hale for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Demonstrations against the execution of Saddam Hussein took place in several cities after Friday prayers, January 5. Editorials continued to criticize the execution, the Iraqi government, and the USG, but also fired a number of salvos in Iran's direction. END SUMMARY.

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DEMONSTRATIONS  
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¶2. (SBU) Media reported that thousands of protesters marched in Amman in a demonstration organized by opposition political parties, including the Ba'th Party and Islamists. The Public Security Directorate estimated 4000 participated. Demonstrators chanted, "Long live Saddam" and "Death to America and Iran," and burned an effigy of President Bush. Participants in the demonstration included some members of parliament, as well as delegations from several Jordanian tribes and Palestinian refugee camps. Another demonstration in Irbid was described in media reports as the largest there in 15 years; PSD estimated 700 took part. A demonstration in Ramtha drew 200, according to PSD.

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ANTI-IRAN MEDIA COMMENTARY  
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¶3. (SBU) Media coverage on January 7 cited Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki's threats to sever ties with countries that criticized the method and timing of Saddam's execution. Meanwhile, some editorials spoke of a "deep shift" in the public view of Iran. Al Arab al Yawm, an independent pro-Palestinian daily often critical of USG and GoJ foreign policy, published an opinion piece by Fahd Khitan claiming that Iran's prestige was declining on the Jordanian street. Iran enjoyed "great popularity" after Israel's conflict with Hezbollah this past summer, he says, but a steady drumbeat of reports of "Iranian sectarian intervention in Iraq," Shiite death squads, and now the execution of Saddam Hussein was starting to "raise voices against Iranian policy" in Iraq.

¶4. (SBU) Ayman Safadi, the chief editor of Al-Ghad, a centrist, independent Arabic daily, wrote, "Iran succeeded in presenting itself as the protector of Islam, the foundation of the resistance against Israel and other anti-Arab and Muslim western countries. It has employed the just Arab causes for an unjust purpose aimed at improving its image and increasing its power in the world of the Arabs."

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NO ADDITIONAL THREAT TO EMBASSY

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15. (C) Jordanian authorities continue to keep close watch on all demonstrations, and we do not believe demonstrations pose an increased threat to the Embassy's security.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/amman/>  
HALE